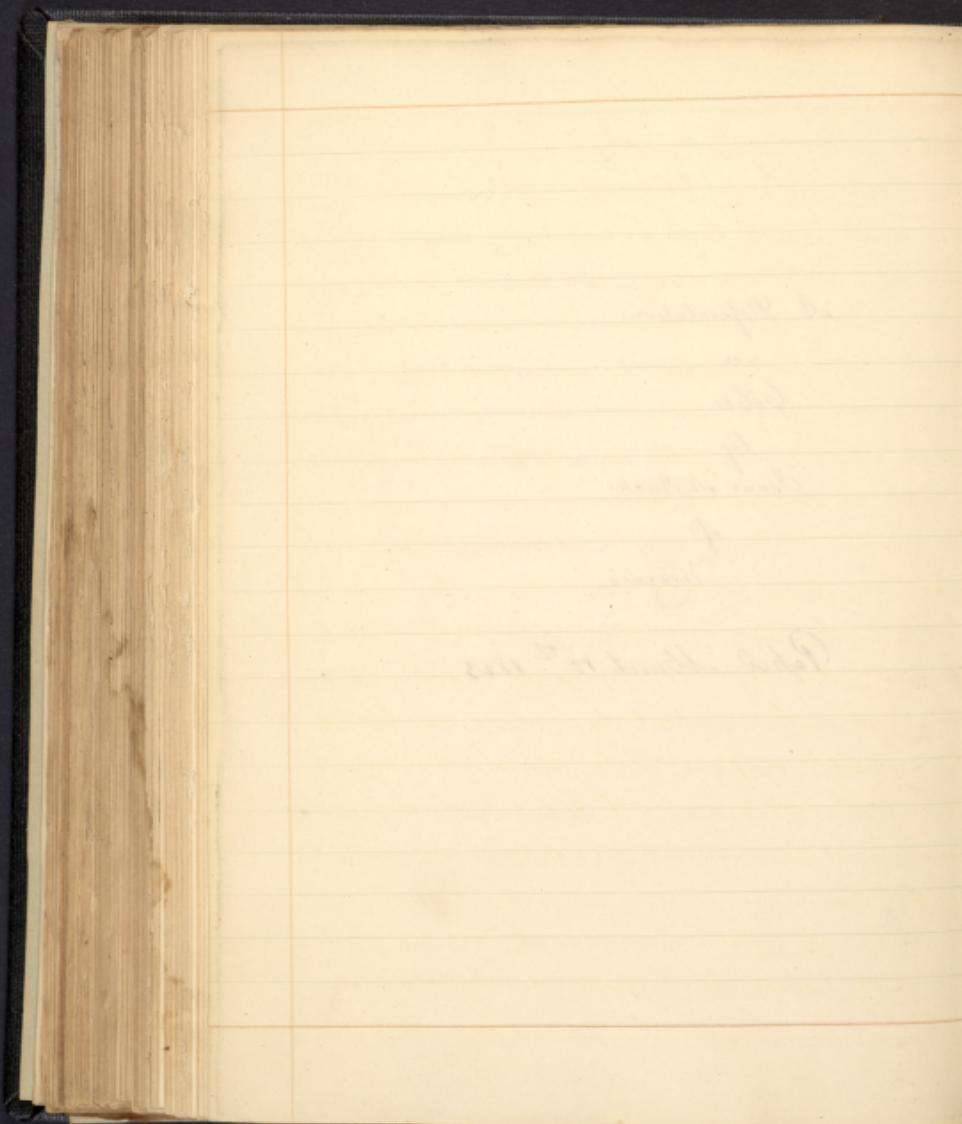


A Dissertation
on
Colic
by
Isaac N. Buck
of
Virginia

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Colic

A disease of such frequent occurrence as Colic, it might be supposed was so perfectly understood, as to leave but little room for improvement in the practice. It will not be denied that the energetic employment of the remedies usually recommended will generally relieve it; yet cases sometimes occur in which the most prompt and judicious employment of the ordinary remedies have no effect in arresting the most painful disease.

Having observed the beneficial effect of Emetics in those intractable cases, and seeing but little notice taken of them by writers on the subject, (who if they notice them at all,) speak so lightly on the subject, that they rarely impress the student with the necessity of using them, particularly when he sees, that the most disagreeable symptoms of the disease, with which he has to contend is the rejection of the contents of the stomach, and sometimes even of the intestines by vomiting. For this reason I have selected this disease as the subject of my Dissertation, and should it have the effect of awakening the attention of others to the subject, I shall have effected all that I expect.

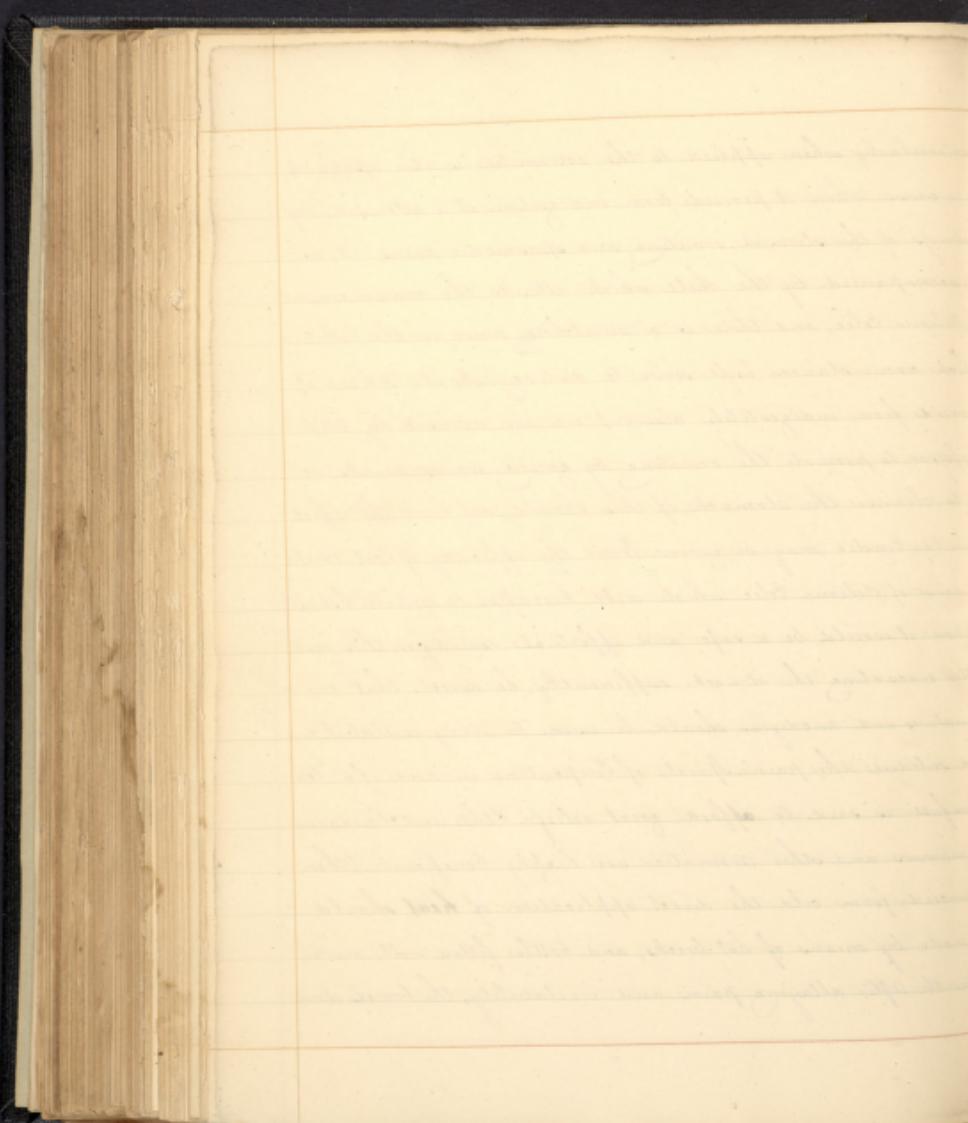
In this essay I shall pursue the plan which has generally been observed by writers on the subject, and after detailing the practice taught by modern writers, shall relate that which has been employed in desperate cases in the County of Cattopar Nag^o (and particularly by my professor) with some cases in which it has been successfully used.

Colic is an appellation derived from Colon the name of one of the intestines, and has been indiscriminately applied to all pains of the abdomen. Bellin defines it "a painful distension spreading over the whole of the belly, and particularly, with a series of twisting around the navel, often with a spasmodic contraction of the muscles, giving the appearance of a bag of round balls; it is usually attended with constipation and frequently vomiting." He divides it in his *Pathology* into seven species. But the division of professor Chapman, into three, is that which I prefer, and shall adopt. The three species into which he divides it, are Flatulent Colic, Dilatious Colic and Colicæ Distonum.

Flatulent Colic is occasioned says our professor by indigestible aliment taken into the stomach, such as Cabbages &c. Colds

so come un bel colpo, le cui vittime
erano le più ricche e le più
potenti della città, come il re
che regge la città di un suo dominio
che non ha fine. Dopo questo spettacolo
che non ha fine, solo come intelligenza e
bontà di governo, non si può credere di
poter trovare un altro che la dignità in ogni
cosa che si vede. E' vero che ancora qualche
cosa non è stata fatta, ma se si pensa che
non c'è nulla che non sia stato fatto
per la gloria di Dio, non si vede che l'ignoranza
o la cattiveria di qualche uomo possa
essere causa di qualche cosa che sia
stata fatta per la gloria di Dio.

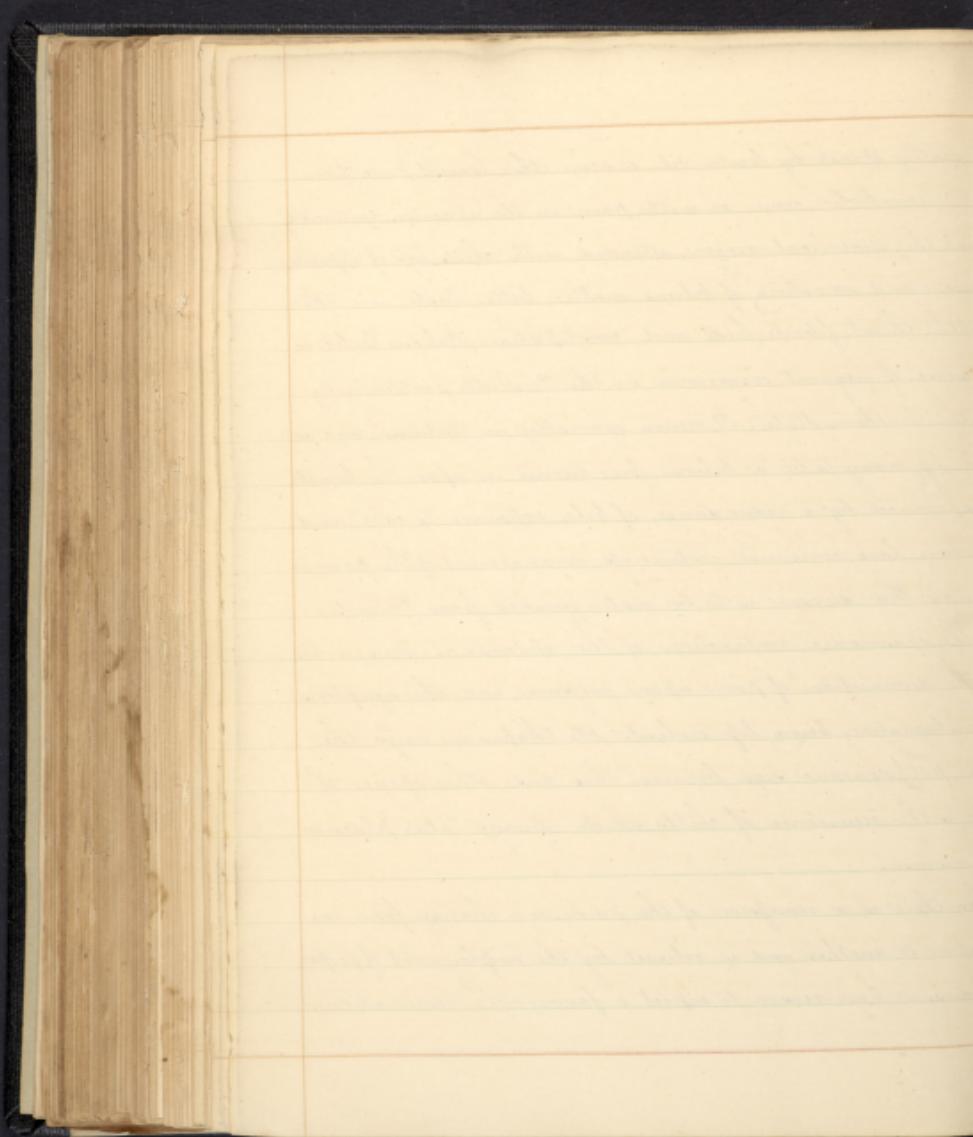
particularly when applied to the extremities is also assigned as a cause. When it proceeds from indigestion, it is attended by sickness of the stomach, vomiting, and spasmodic pains, it is unaccompanied by the chills which attend the commencement of Bilious Colic, and there is a rumbling noise in the intestines which circumstances will serve to distinguish it. When it proceeds from indigestible aliment we are advised by the professor to promote the vomiting by giving warm drinks, so as to cleanse the stomach, if this should not have the effect, a mild Emetic may be given. From the efficacy of Tart. Emetic in cases of Bilious Colic which will hereafter be noticed, I should suppose it would be a safe and effectual remedy in this case. After evacuating the stomach sufficiently, he directs that carminatives and anodynes should be used to allay irritability, and subdue the pain. Spirits of Turpentine in doses of a tea-spoonfull, is said to afford great relief. Ether and Laudanum, Cinnamon, and other aromatics are highly beneficial. When it proceeds from cold the direct application of heat should be made by means of hot bricks, and bottles filled with warm water &c. After allaying pain and irritability, the bowels should



be gently opened by Castor oil or some other lenient purgative.

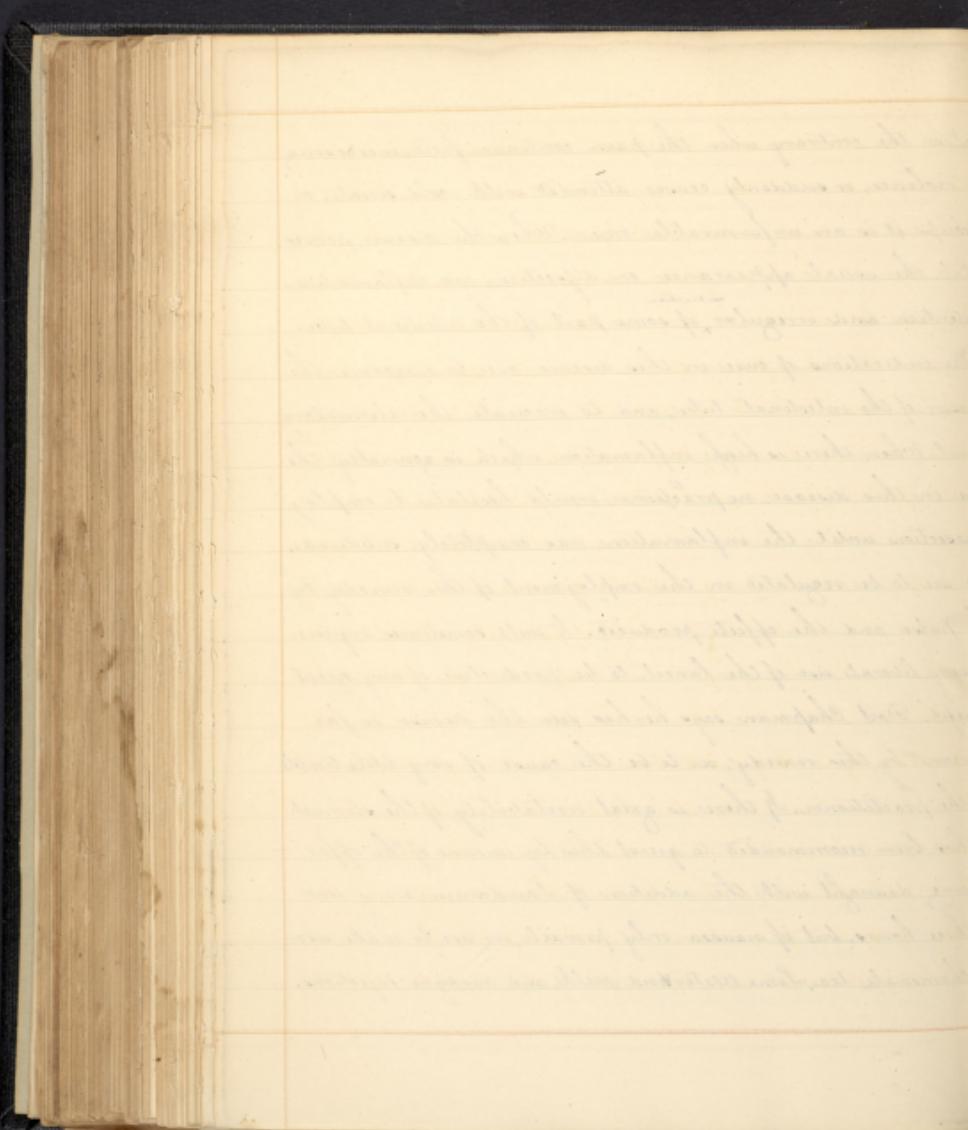
Bilious Colic comes on with pain in the abdomen particularly about the umbilical region, attended with chills, loss of appetite, nausea, and vomiting of bilious matter, bitter taste in the mouth, thirst, fibrile heat and constipation. Bilious Colic is a disease of frequent occurrence in the United States particularly in the Southern States. It occurs generally in Autumn, and is said by many to be a bilious fever turned in upon the bowels. It is produced by a redundancy of bile, exposure to cold and moisture, long continued coolness, derangement of the primary visc. &c. This disease is to be distinguished from Enteritis by the spasmodic contraction of the abdominal muscles, and by the diminution of pain upon pressure, and the symptoms of inflammation being less violent. Dr Chapman says the great pathognomonic sign between this and other species of colic is the occurrence of chills which always takes place in this disease.

When there is a remission of the pain, or a change from one situation to another, and is relieved by the employment of proper remedies, we have reason to expect a favourable termination;

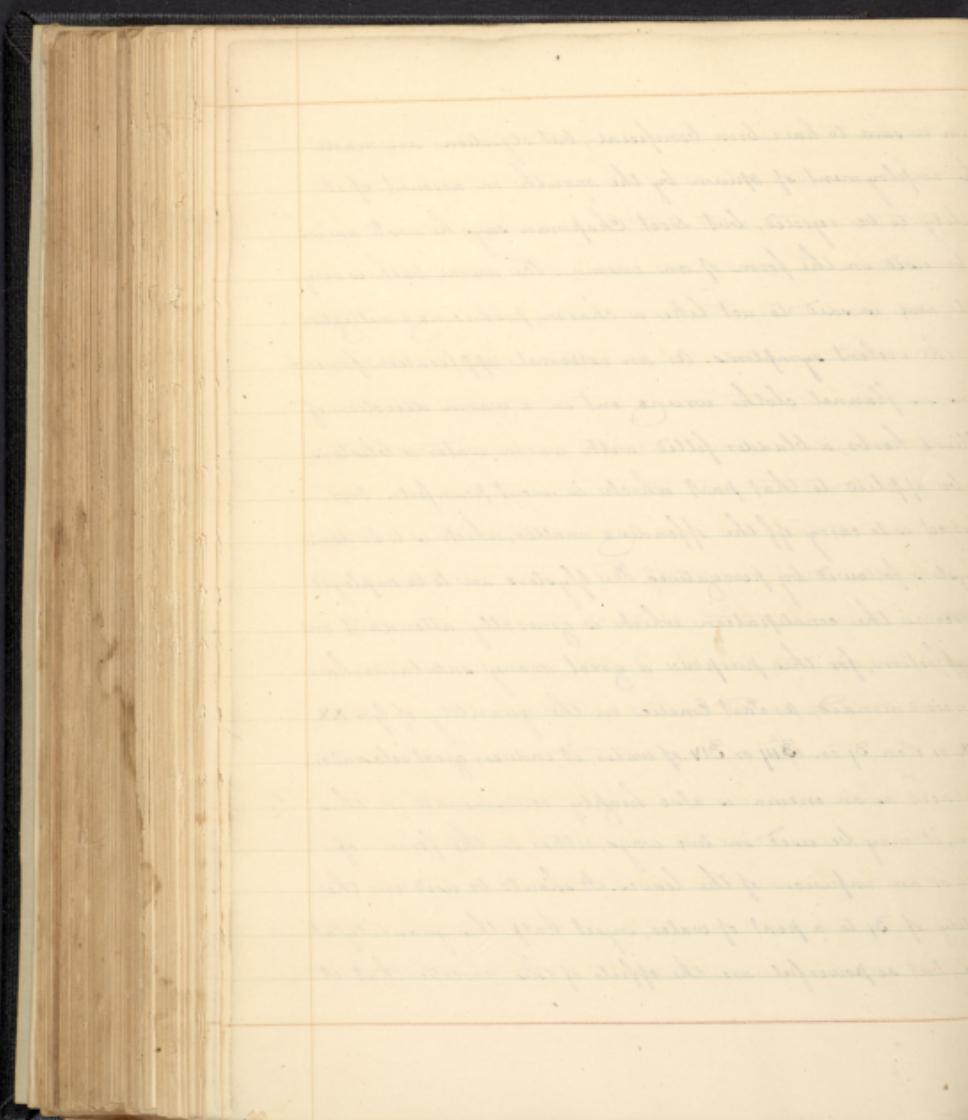


but on the contrary when the pain continues fixed, increasing in violence, or suddenly ceases attended with cold sweats, or hiccups, it is an unfavourable omen. When the disease proves fatal the usual appearance on dissection, are inflammation, distortion and irregular ^{mention} of some part of the intestinal tube.

The indications of cure in this disease are, to overcome the spasms of the intestinal tube, and to evacuate the alimentary canal. When there is high inflammation, which is generally the case in this disease, no practitioner would hesitate to employ colectomy until the inflammation was completely subsided. We are to be regulated in the employment of this remedy by the pulse and the effects produced. It will sometimes require a very liberal use of the lancet, to be productive of any great benefit. Dr. Chapman says he has seen the disease so far overcome by this remedy, as to be the cause of very little trouble to the practitioner. If there is great irritability of the stomach it has been recommended to quiet this by means of the effervescing draught with the addition of Laudanum, every two or three hours, but if nausea only prevails, we are to make use of Chamomile tea, Lime water and milk, and anodyne injections.

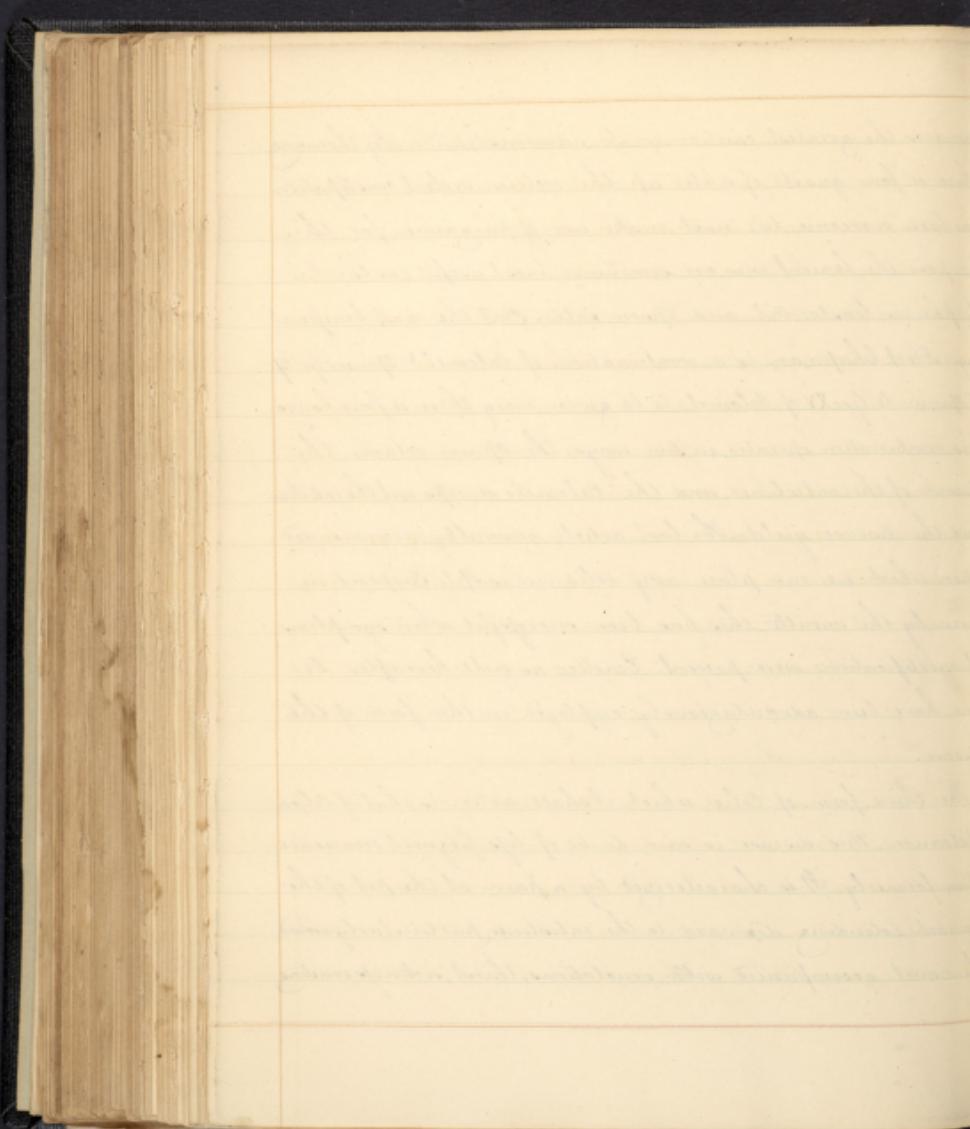


Opium is said to have been beneficial, but objections are made to the employment of opium by the mouth on account of its liability to be rejected, but Doct. Chapman says he would advise it to be used in the form of an enema. The warm bath is very useful, and is said to act like a charm, producing a mitigation of all the violent symptoms. As an external application fomentations, as flannel cloths wrung out in a warm decoction of mollifiant herbs, a bladder filled with warm water or blisters may be applied to that part which is most painful. Our next object is to carry off the offending matter, which is to be done by fomentations followed by purgatives. The fomentations are to be employed to overcome the concrepation which is generally attendant on this affection, for this purpose a great many substances have been recommended, as Part. Camellie in the quantity of 4oz XX. or XXX. or even 3j in 3ij or 3iv of water, it induces great relaxation. The Tobacco as an enema is also highly recommended in this disease, it may be used in two ways, either in the form of smoke or an infusion of the leaves. It should be used in the quantity of 3j to a pint of water, inject half this quantity at a time; but so powerful are the effects of this narcotic that it



requires the greatest caution in its administration. By throwing three or four quarts of water up the rectum violent constipation has been overcome. We next make use of purgatives, for this purpose the lenient ones are sometimes most useful; as the Lac Sulphuris, Castor Oil and Opium Salts. But the most beneficial says Dr. Chapman is a combination of Calomel & Opium by 4 grs of Opium to 450 of Calomel to be given every three or four hours. This combination operates in two ways; the Opium relaxes the Spasm of the intestines, and the Calomel sweeps out the intestine and the disease yields. The last article generally recommended upon which we can place any reliance is Spt. Sanguinaria given by the mouth this has been successful when symptoms of mortification were present. Emetics as will hereafter be seen have been advantageously employed in this form of the disease.

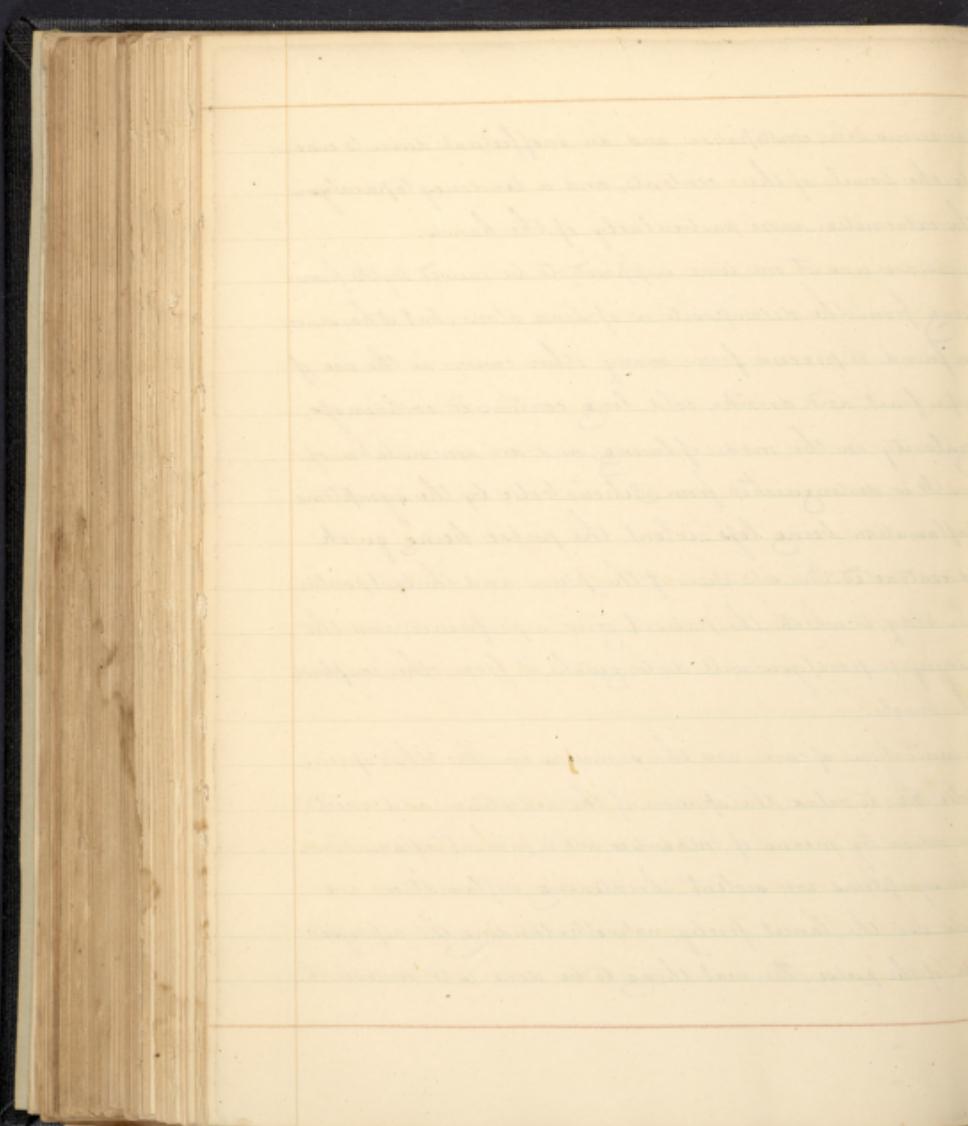
The third form of Colic which I shall notice is that of Colica Pictorum. This disease is said to be of less frequent occurrence than formerly. It is characterized by a pain at the pit of the stomach extending downward to the intestines, particularly around the navel, accompanied with eructations, thirst, sickness, vomiting



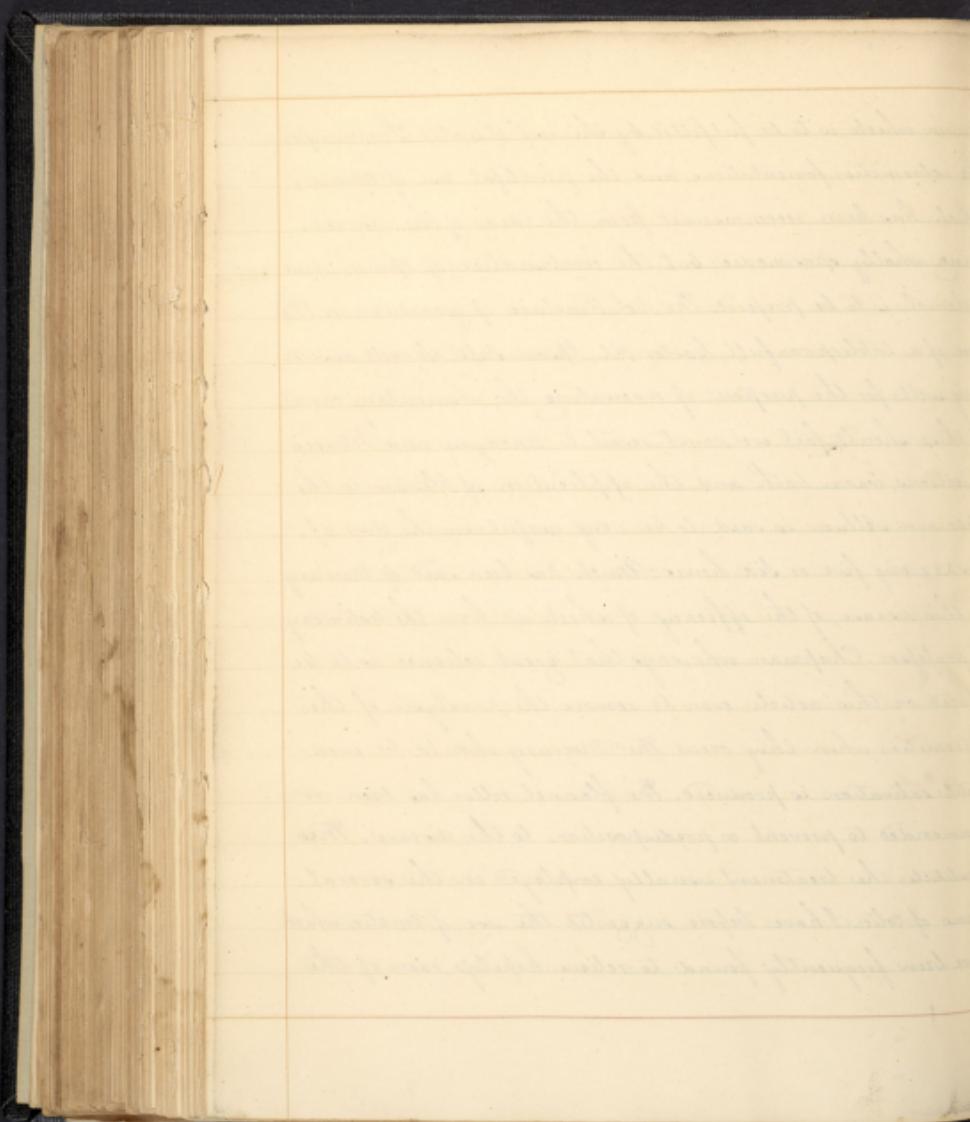
of poraceous bile, constipation and an ineffectual desire to evacuate the bowels of their contents, and a tendency to paralysis of the extremities more particularly of the hands.

This disease was at one time supposed to be caused by the fumes arising from the decomposition of Lead alone, but it has since been found to proceed from many other causes as the use of unripe fruit, acid drinks, cold, long continued constipation, irregularity in the mode of living, and an accumulation of bile. It is distinguished from Bilious Colic by the symptoms of inflammation being less violent, the pulse being quick and contracted. The situation of the pain and the position of the body, to which the patient gives a preference; and the tendency to paralysis will distinguish it from other complaints of the bowels.

The indications of cure are the same as in the other species of colic viz to relax the spasm of the intestines and excite their action by means of cathartics, and to prevent inflammation. If the symptoms are violent threatening inflammation we should use the lancet freely, notwithstanding the depressed state of the pulse. The next thing to be done is to remove the

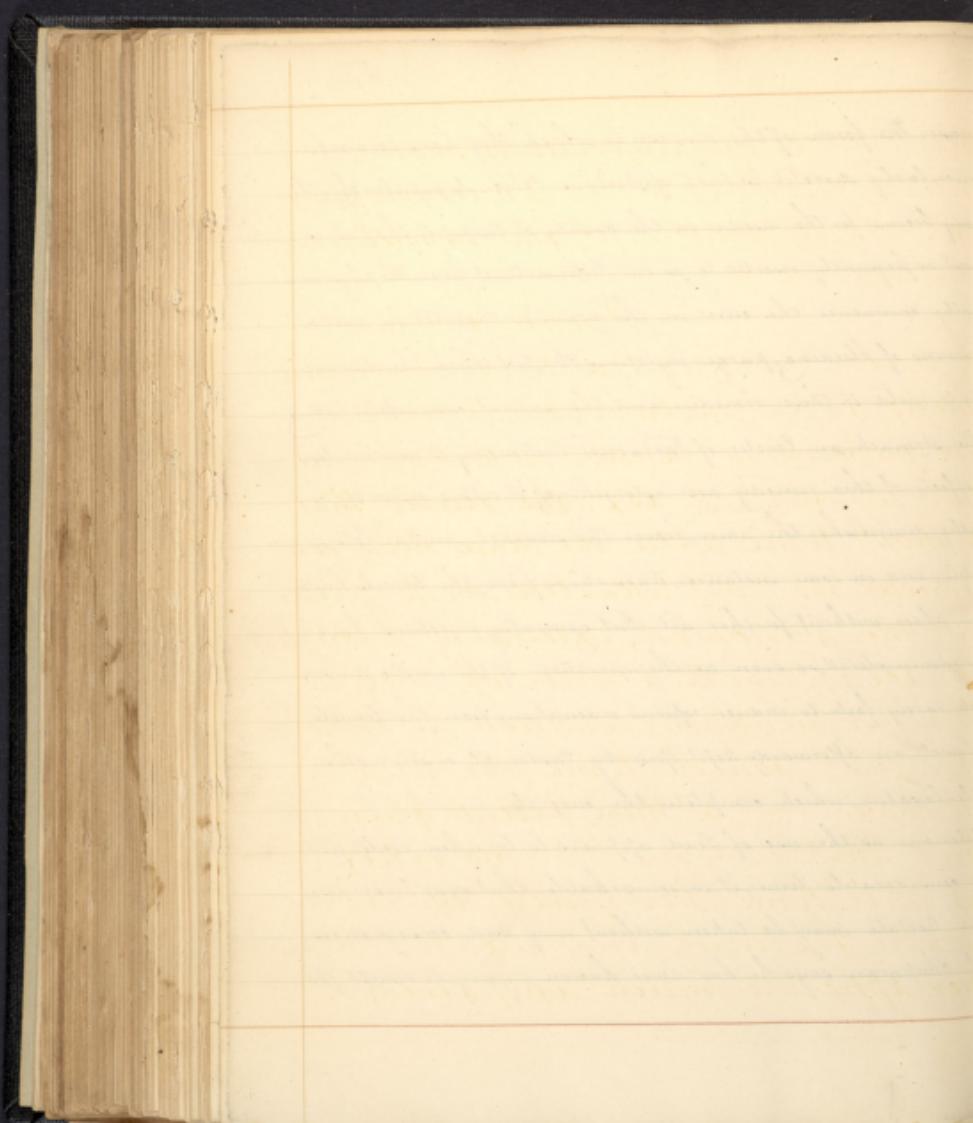


spasms, which is to be fulfilled by the use of water thrown upon the extremities, fomentations, and the plentiful use of Opium, which has been recommended from the idea of the disease being wholly spasmodic; but the combination of Opium and Calomel is to be preferred. The Vol. Tincture of Guaiacum in the use of a tablespoonfull, Castor oil, Opium salts, &c will answer very well for the purpose of evacuating the alimentary canal. If these should fail we must resort to anodyne and Tobacco injections, warm bath and the application of blisters to the abdomen. Alum is said to be very useful in the dose of $\frac{1}{2}$ drs every five or six hours. Much has been said of Mercury in this disease, of the efficacy of which we have the testimony of professor Chapman who says that great reliance is to be placed on this article, even to remove the paralysis of the extremities when they occur. The Mercury should be used until salivation is produced. The flannel roller has been recommended to prevent a predisposition to the disease. This constitutes the treatment usually employed in the several forms of colic. I have before suggested the use of Cretes, which have been frequently found to relieve hopeless cases of the



disease. The form of the disease to which they have been more particularly directed is that of Silicious Colic. So popular has this remedy become for the disease in the County of Essex, that it is almost as frequently resorted to as in Intermittent fever. The physicians usually commence the cure in the manner directed by author, by means of bleeding, purges, injections &c. But when the disease fails to yield to those remedies, and the patient can retain nothing on his stomach, an Emetic of Tartarized Antimony is administered. The effects of this remedy are astonishing, it either removes or greatly diminishes the pain, leaves the stomach much less irritable, and in some instances, evacuations from the bowels have taken place without further aid. But generally injections have been administered so soon as the operation of the emetic is over, which rarely fails to induce copious evacuations from the bowels. The bowels are afterwards kept open by Castor oil or some other gentle laxative, which completes the cure &c.

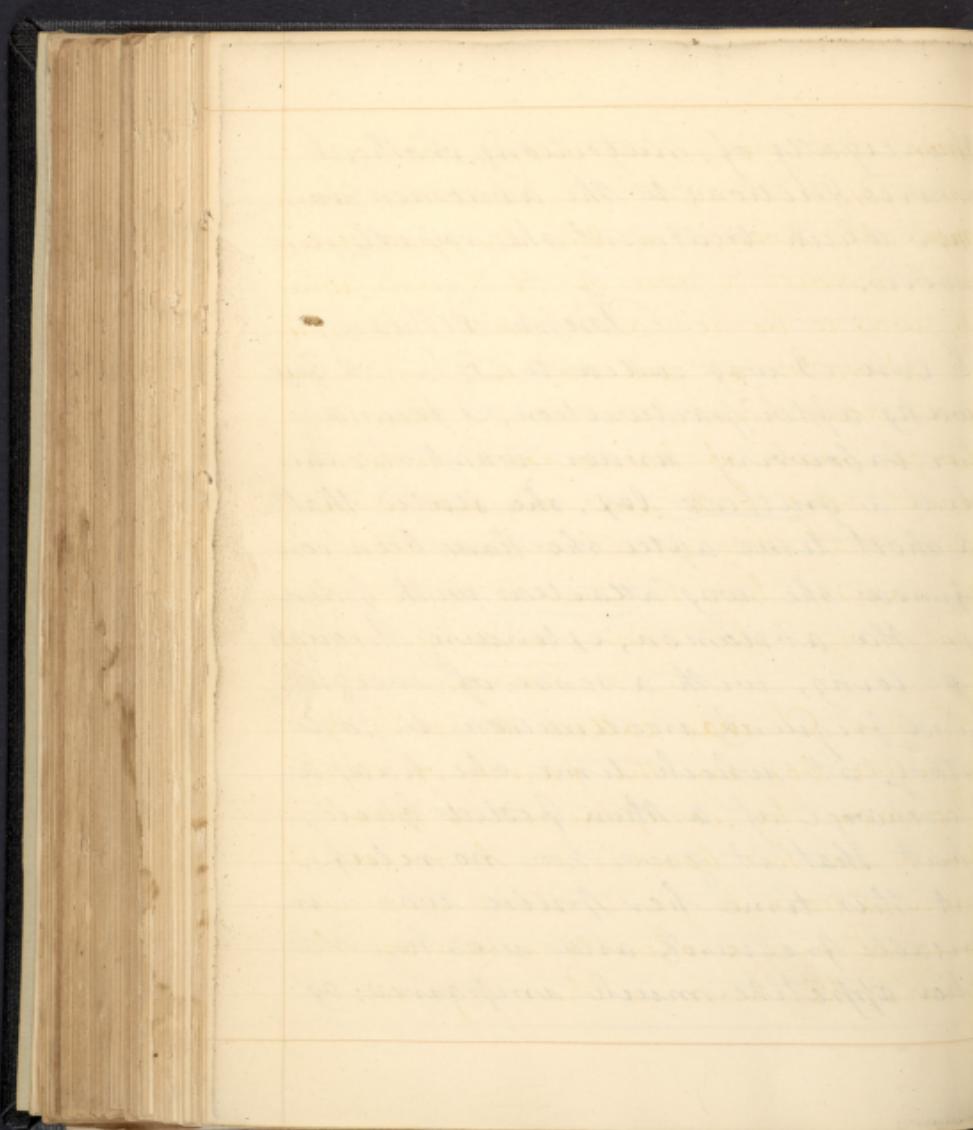
Deteriorous as the use of Lead appears to be when continued for a considerable time, it is remarkable that very large doses of the Acetate may be taken without any bad consequences. Dr. Chapman says he has never known injury to result in



principally of nutritious broths, I ordered frictions to the abdomen and aer which treatment she rapidly recovered.

Josephs Pittian

2000 I was called to S. J. — a few weeks after parturition, I found as her labouring under what she called a subacute lax, she stated that a short time after she had been confined she was attacked with pain in the abdomen, extending through the loins, with a sense of weight and frequent inclination to go to stool, at which time she had a discharge of a thin fetid fluid; but that it gave her no relief; at this time her pulse was irritable frequent and weak, and her appetite much impaired; as



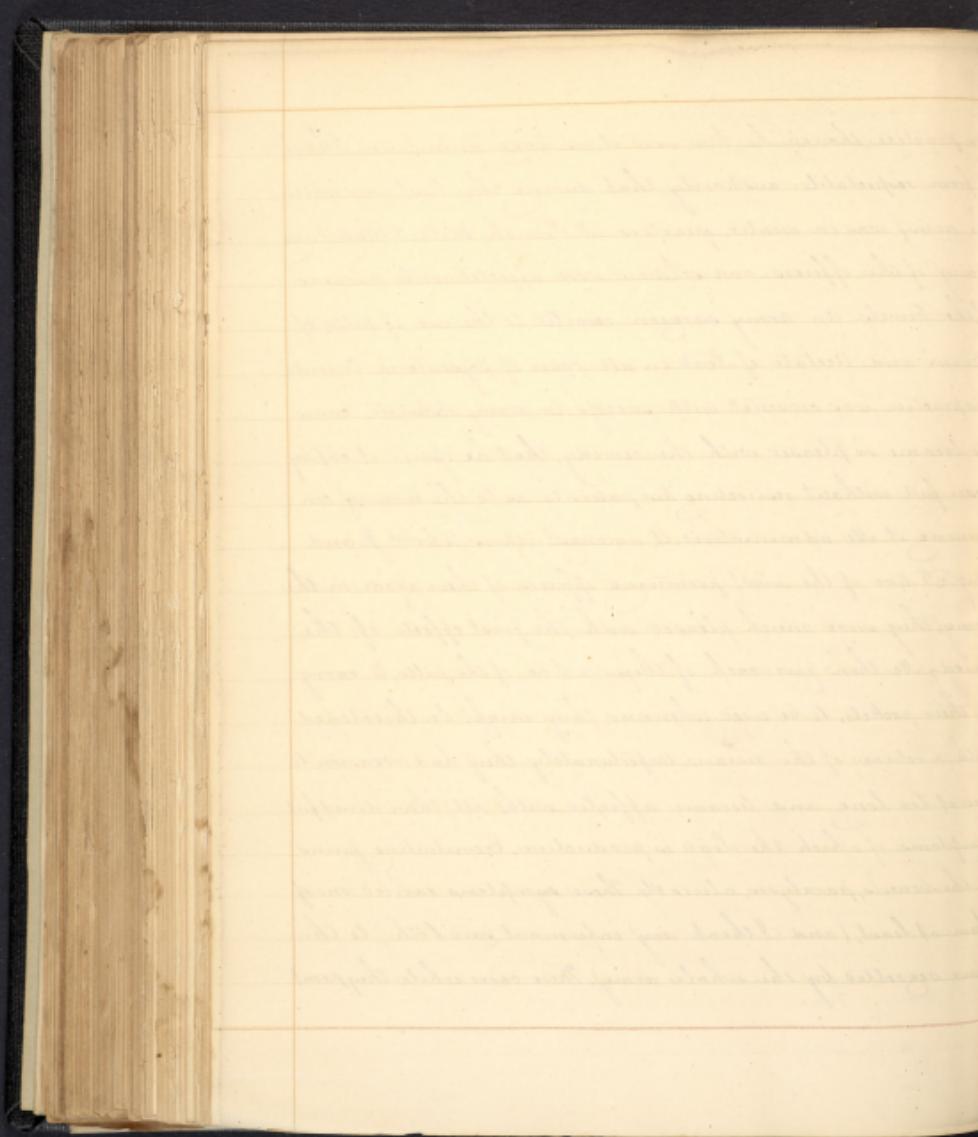
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there was no relief from the dis-
charge, I thought it proceeded from
impacted feces in the large intestine
and ordered a dose of Ol Ricini whi-
ch was to be repeated until it shou-
ld operate; it did not till after sev-
eral doses had been given; then a
large mass of hard feces which
smelt very badly was discharged she
says that they smelt so badly that
it caused her to faint; after this
discharge she soon recovered

Jos Parry

3rd Cons I was called to see D. 9-
a little boy in the family of Capt
O'connor he complained of great
pain in his bowels with frequent
inclination to go to stool and wo-
uld strain violently when on the
chair; he had a thin liquid

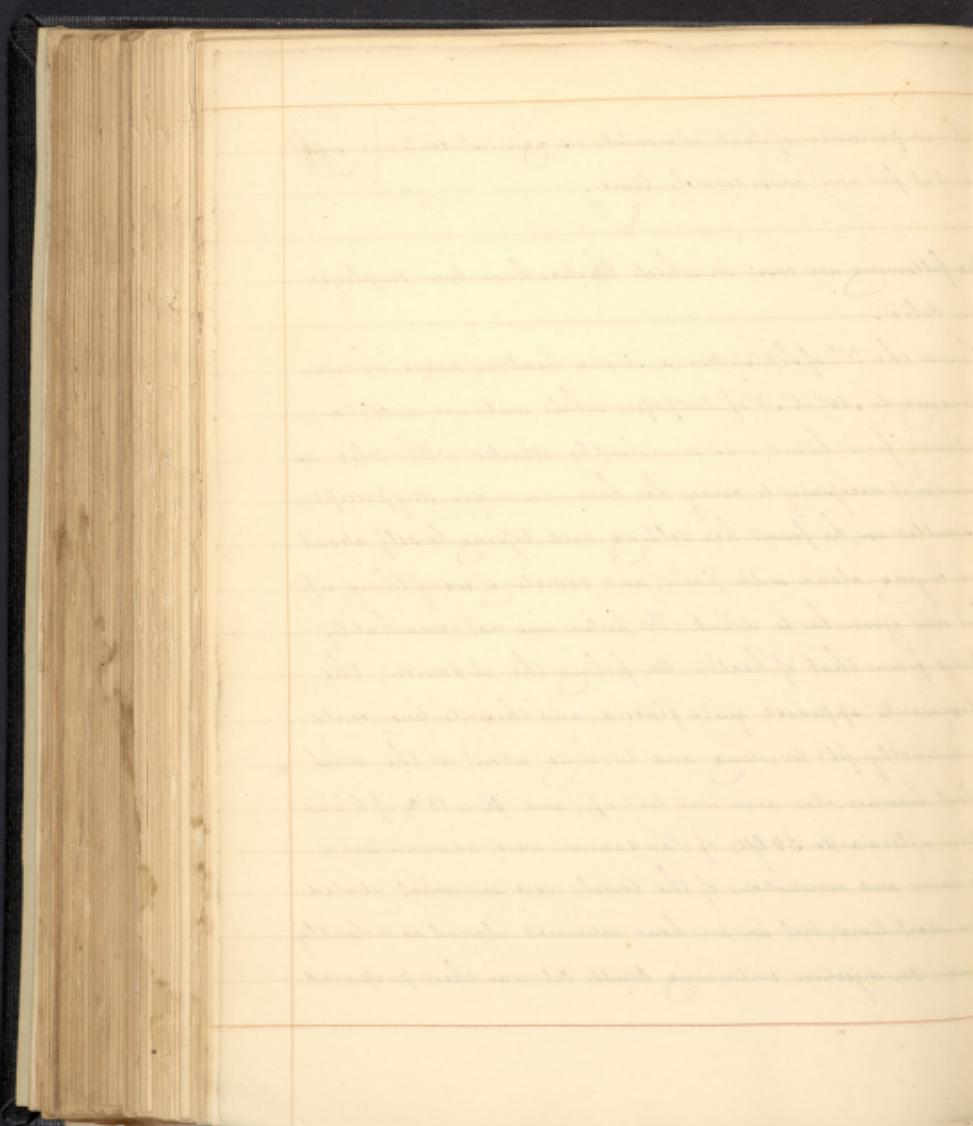
his practice, though he has used it in large quantities. I have it from respectable authority, that during the last war while the army was in winter quarters at French Mills & Lattaburg many of the officers and soldiers were affected with diseases of the bowels. An army surgeon resorted to the use of pills of Opium and Acetate of Lead in all cases of Dysentery Cruenta. His practice was crowned with success in many obstinate cases. He became so pleased with the remedy, that he issued it out by boxes full without restricting his patients as to the time of continuing it. He administered it amongst others to Colr J and Maj T B two of the most promising officers of their grade in the army, they were much pleased with the first effects of the remedy. He then gave each of them a box of the pills, to carry in their pockets, to be used whenever they might be threatened with a return of the disease. Unfortunately they had occasion to use it too long, and became affected with all those dreadful symptoms of which the Lead is productive, Excruciating pains in the bowels, paralysis, ulcers &c. Those symptoms carried one of them at least, (and I think my informant said both) to the grave regretted by the whole army. These cases while they point



to the importance of seat, admonish us against continuing the use of it for any considerable time.

The following are cases in which Emetics have been employed in Colic.

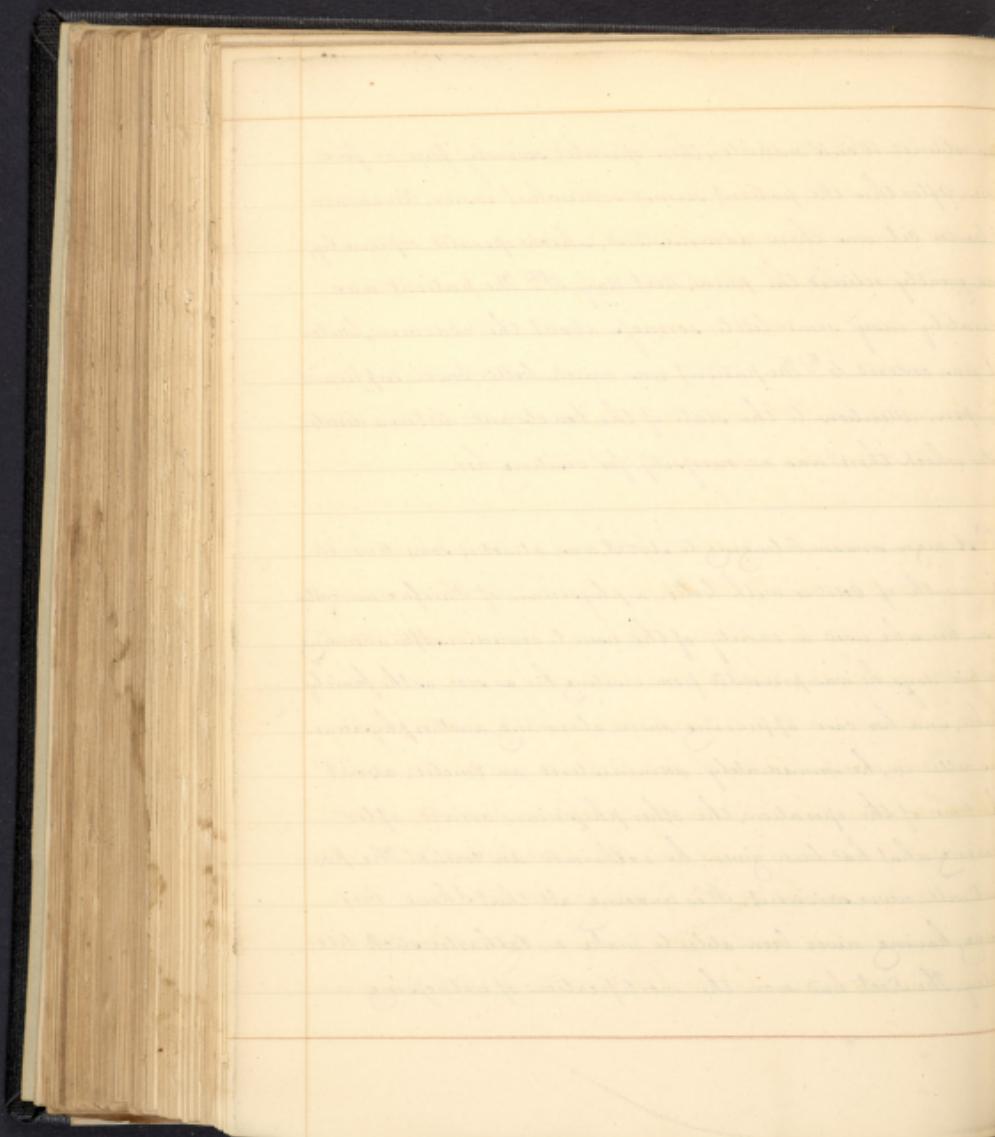
1^o On the 30th of September a strong healthy negro woman belonging to Mr. C. St. of Culpeper while walking a certain distance from home, was so violently attacked with Colic as to render it necessary to carry her home in a gig. My preceptor was called in, he found her rolling and tossing herself about and crying aloud with pain, and vomiting every thing up that was given her to drink. The pulse was not remarkably altered from that of health. On feeling the abdomen, the integuments appeared quite flaccid, and the intestines could be distinctly felt twisting and turning about in the most violent manner. Her arm was tied up, and 40 or 18 fls of blood taken, afterwards 50 fls of Laudanum were administered. The pain and commotion of the bowels were somewhat abated for a short time, but in an hour returned almost as violently as ever. An injection containing Castor Oil was then prepared



and 60 pills of Tinct. Opii added to it, it was retained for a short time, and then came away without faeces. The injections were repeated several times, omitting the Tinct. Opii; without inducing any faecal discharge. The stomach being somewhat quieted a large dose of Castor oil was administered. There was a good deal of retching after taking it, but it was believed that the oil was retained. She was left in the care of the family for the night, with directions to administer an Enema if the medicine should not operate in three hours, and administer an infusion of Senna and Cream of Tartar as the circumstances of the case required. Next morning 4th she was still unrelieved, the injection and 3XXIV of strong infusion of Senna had been administered, the attendants believed that there was a partial discharge of faeces sometime in the night. She was then put into the warm bath and an enema composed of the infusion of Senna and Castor oil administered, without affording relief. Pills composed of Calomel Grs X and Opium Grt were directed to be given every two hours. Four of the pills were taken without effect. It was then determined to resort to an Emetic. Grs IV of Tart. Emetic dissolved in an ounce of warm water were given. The medicine

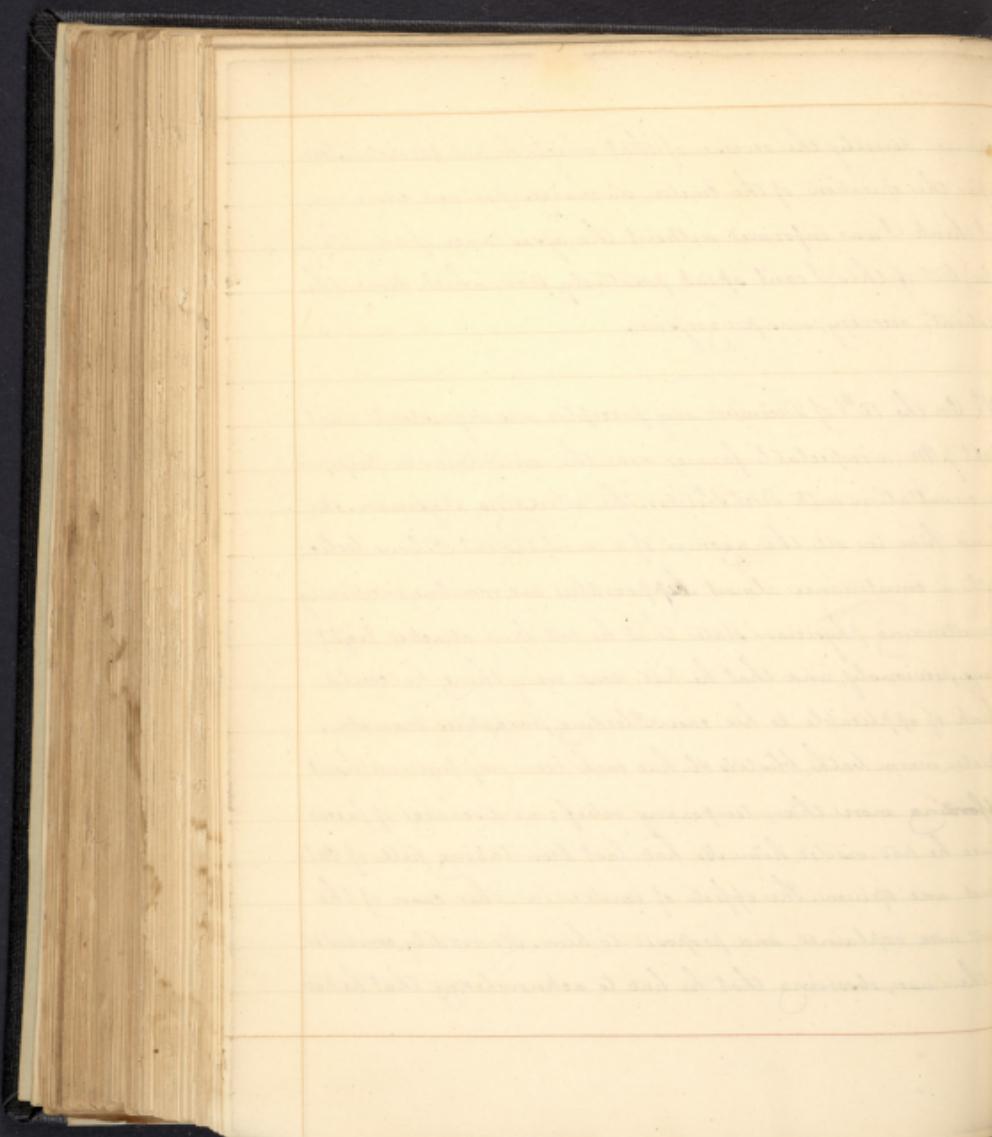
was retained 10 or 15 minutes, then operated severely four or five times. After this the patient seemed somewhat easier. An enema of castor oil was then administered, which operated copiously, and greatly relieved the pain. Next day 5th The patient was tolerably easy some little scruples about the abdomen, castor oil was ordered. 6th The patient was much better, bowel sufficient= by open. Attention to the state of the bowel and diet were directed, after which there was no necessity for visiting her.

2nd A negro woman belonging to Mr. P., was attacked some time in the month of October with colic, a physician of Fairfax was called to see her, who used a variety of the usual remedies. After attending her two days, he was prevented from visiting her as soon as the family wished, and her case appearing more alarming, another physician was called in, he immediately administered an emetic, about the time of the operation, the other physician arrived, after hearing what had been given, he exclaimed! an Emetic! The patient will never survive it. It is undoing all that I have been doing, having never been able to make a cathartic stick till today. The Doct. had soon the mortification of witnessing a

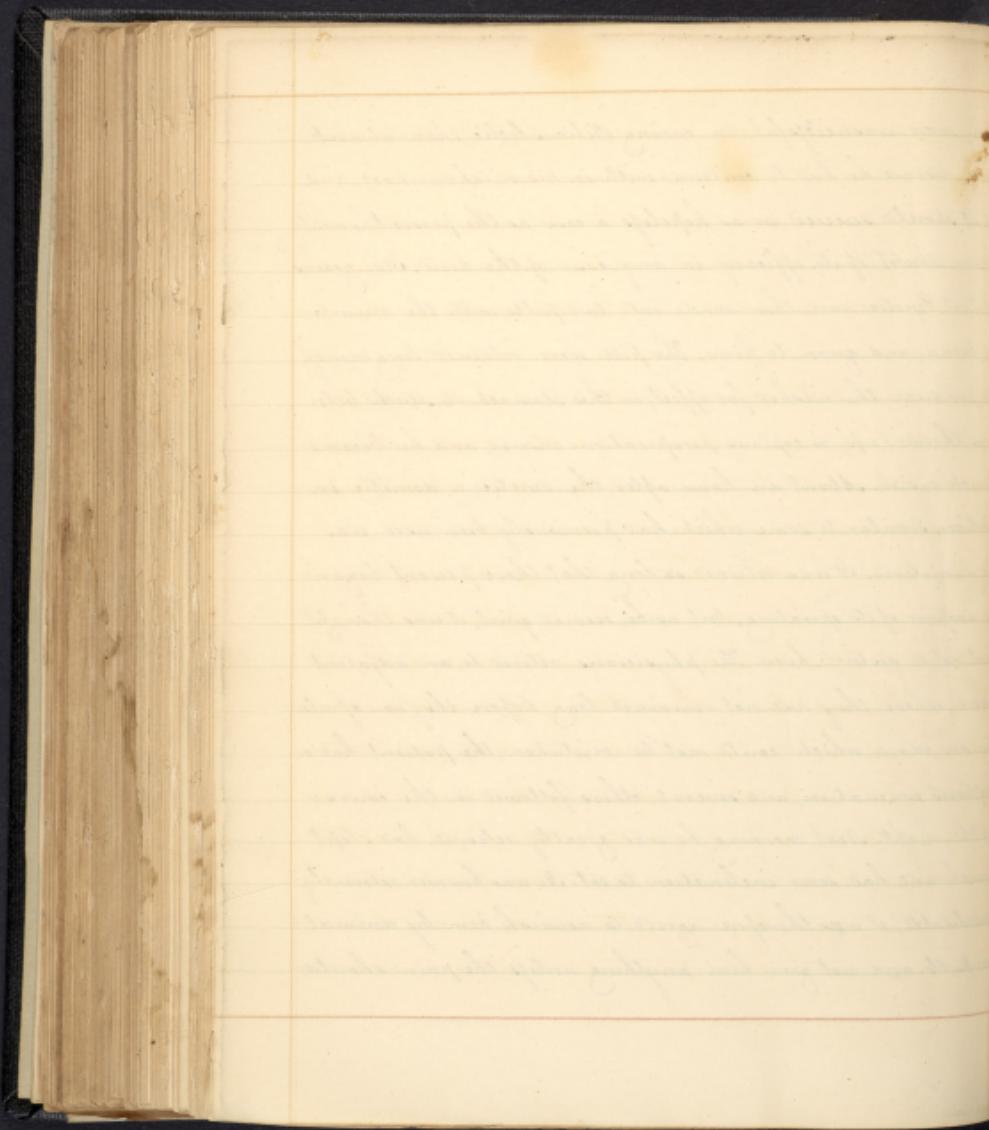


change directly the reverse of that which he had predicted. Soon after the operation of the emetic, discharges per anæ came on; (I think I was informed without the assistance of any thing else) but of this I can't speak positively, from which time the patient's recovery was progressive.

3^o On the 18th of December my preceptor was requested to visit Capt. J. M. (a respectable farmer near the mountains in Culpeper) in consultation with Doct. Fletcher, the attending physician. He found him in all the agonies of a most violent bilious colic, with a countenance almost Hippocratic and vomiting incipiently. The attending physician states that he had been attacked eight days previously, and that he had done every thing he could think of applicable to his case. Bleeding, purgatives, emetics, opiate, warm bath, blisters &c. had each been employed without affording more than temporary relief; no discharge of faæ since he had visited him. He had last been taking pills of Calomel and opium. The effects of emetics in other cases of the kind were explained, and proposed to him. He readily consented to their use, observing that he had to acknowledge that he had



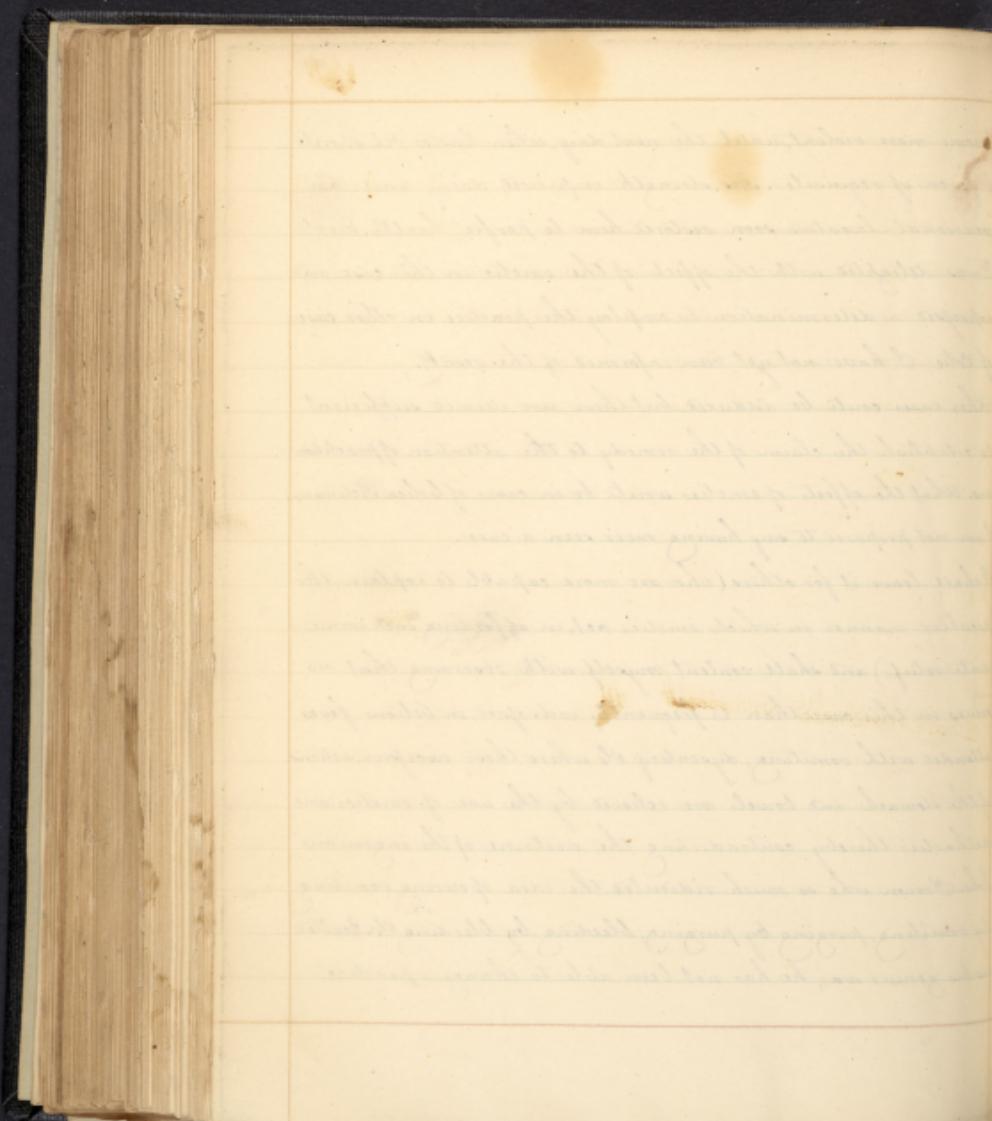
been more unsuccessful in curing Bilious Colic than almost any disease he had to contend with in his neighbourhood, and if it should succeed in as hopeless a case as the present, he would never doubt of its efficacy in any case of the kind. Five grains of Tart. Emetic were then made into two pills with the crumb of bread, and given to him. The pills were retained long enough to produce the wished for effect, on the stomach &c. Much bile was thrown up; a copious perspiration ensued, and he became much easier. About an hour after the emetic, a domitie injection, similar to some which had previously been used was administered. It was retained so long that those present began to despair of its operating, but as he seemed quiet, it was thought best not to disturb him. The physicians retired to an adjacent room, where they had not remained long, before they were aghast by an odour which could not be mistaken, the patient had a copious evacuation, and several others followed in the course of the night. Next morning he was greatly relieved, had slept much and had some inclination to eat. He was however extremely debilitated; it was therefore agreed to nourish him by animal soups &c. and not give him anything unless the pain should



become more violent, until the next day, when Castor oil should be given if requisite. His strength improved daily and an occasional laxative soon restored him to perfect health. Doct. F. was delighted with the effect of the emetic in this case and expressed a determination to employ the practice in other cases of Colic, I have not yet been informed of the result.

Other cases could be adduced, but these are deemed sufficient to establish the claim of the remedy to the attention of practitioners. What the effects of emetics would be in cases of Colica Pectorum I am not prepared to say having never seen a case.

I shall leave it for others (who are more capable to explain the peculiar manner in which emetics act, in affording such immediate relief,) and shall content myself with observing that no ^{more} occurs in this case than is frequently witnessed, in billions few attended with vomiting, dysentery &c where those expansive actions of the stomach and bowels are relieved by the use of emetics and cathartics; thereby contradicting the doctrine of the ingenious John Brown who so much ridicules the idea of curing vomiting by vomiting, purging by purging, bleeding by bleeding &c. Called as his genius was, he has not been able to change a practice



which experience has proven so efficacious. ^{white} I claim the attention
of the illustrious professors of this institution, for the many errors
which they may discover in this juvenile production. I beg
leave to express to them my gratitude for the indefatigable
zeal which they have evinced in setting forth the correct
principles of the several branches which they profess. Long
may they continue in the successful discharge of those im-
portant duties.

